

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS



In ancient times, Christians used to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem for Holy Week. One popular activity while they were there was to walk the route from Pilate's house to Calvary, stopping for devotionals to commemorate various events that took place along the way.

Of course most people didn't do every year, so they made carvings or pictures of each of the events along the way, and placed them at intervals, either outdoors or in a church. Then they could walk the route, stop at each place to do a devotional, and relive the experience. It also made the experience accessible to people who couldn't afford to travel to Jerusalem.

As you prepare to journey through the various events, take a moment to pause in prayer.

As you progress, take your time. Do not be in a hurry. Focus on each devotional and remember the gift of life that Christ has given you through His Holy Spirit.

Take bread for the journey
And strength for the fight
Comfort to sleep through the night
Wisdom to choose at the fork in the road
And a heart that knows the way home

Go in peace, live in grace
Trust in the arms that will hold you
Go in peace, live in grace
Trust God's love

In preparation, you may begin with Communion – just as Jesus began that last night with His disciples.

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

If you have the elements, take the bread and juice then spend some time in prayer.

- Matthew 26:26-29

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Heavenly Father, will we ever understand all that Jesus has done for us? As he gathered with his disciples for the last time before he died, he washed their feet to teach us that we must serve each other.

And then while at table, breaking bread and sharing the cup, Jesus offered the gift of himself to his disciples – and to us.

In the midst of the problems and pains of our lives, it is easy to forget that we must serve as Jesus did.

As he gave himself to us in the Eucharist, nourish and sustain us that we might share his life and his love with others.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

Jesus Prays in the Garden



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. ⁴⁵ And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

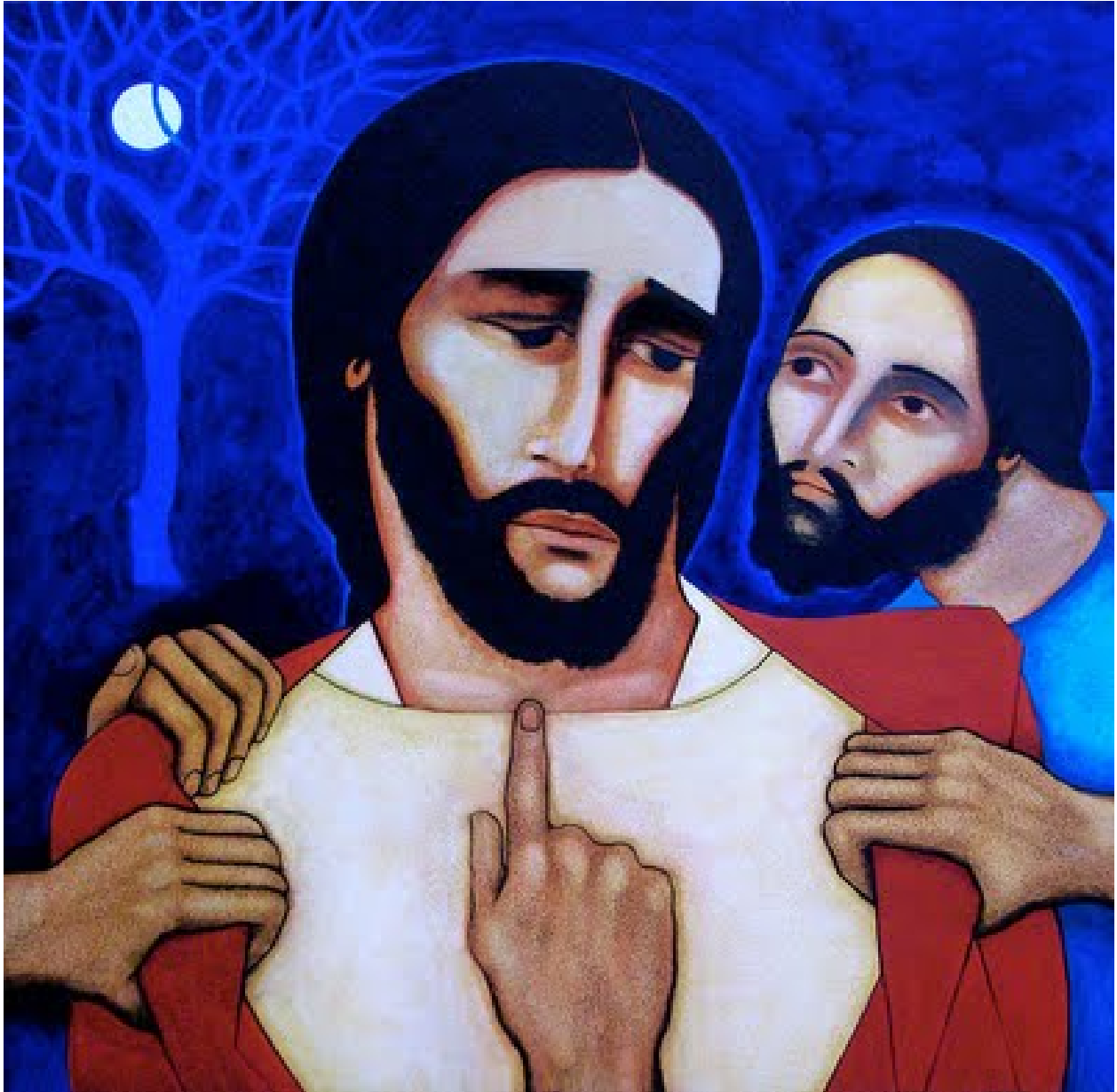
- Luke 22:41-46

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, we see you in the garden, praying in the darkness of night. Your anguished prayer is one of deep struggle with the Father's will. While you agonize over the Father's will and are strengthened to fulfill his plan, your disciples, overcome with sadness, can do nothing but give themselves over to sleep. As we begin this journey with you, Jesus, help us to see that for you it was a journey of love. May we learn from this walk how to follow you more closely and accept the love that you have for us.

O Jesus, wake us from our sleep. Help us to face life's difficulties honestly, knowing that we can trust in God. Strengthen us in the time of our trials. May our prayer always be an expression of all that we are, and all that we do. We love you, Jesus; teach us how to pray. Amen

Jesus is Betrayed and Arrested



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁴³ And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.” ⁴⁵ And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁴⁶ And they laid hands on him and seized him.

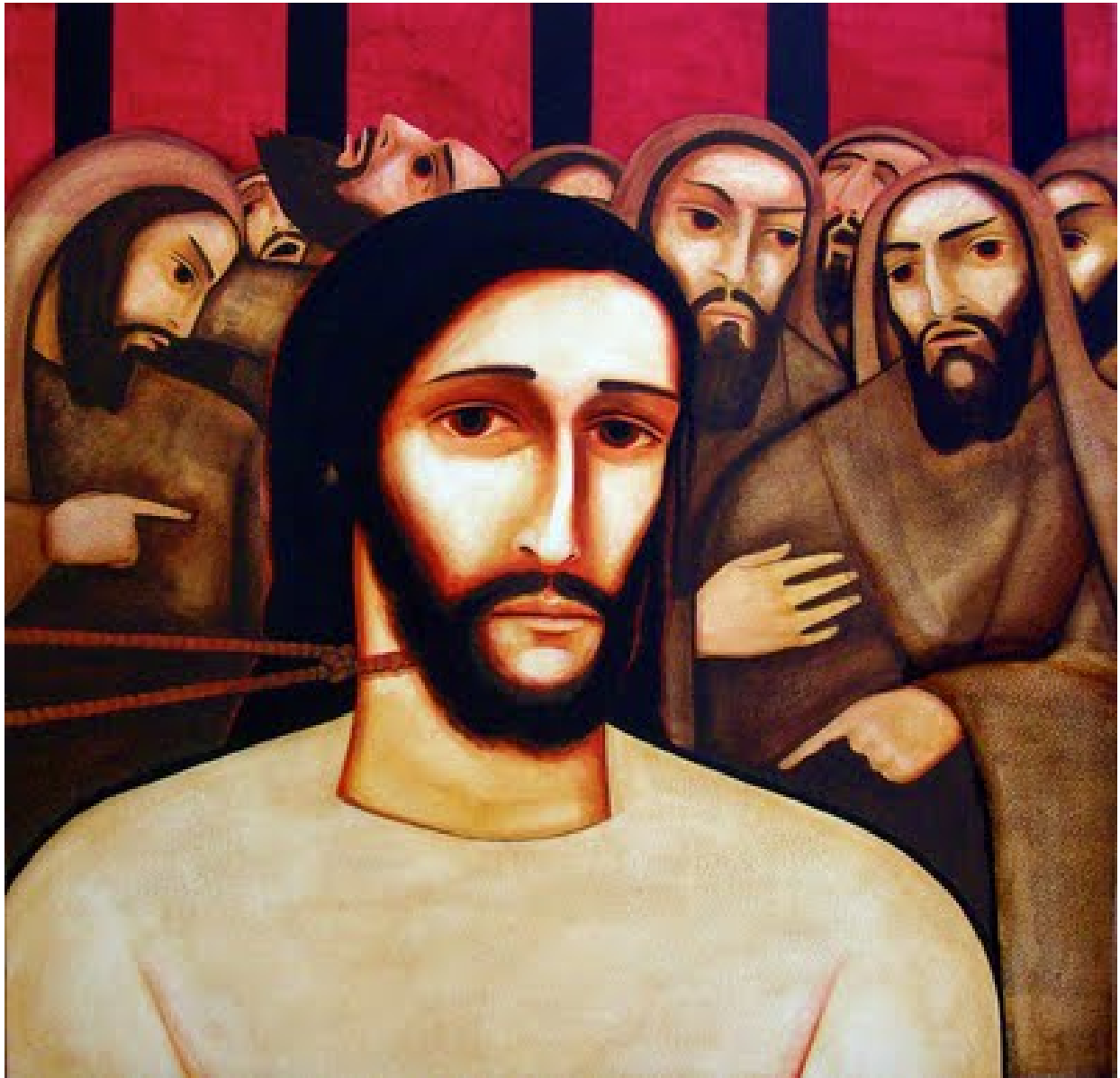
- **Mark 14:43-46**

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, as you wake your disciples, one who has not slept arrives with an angry crowd. Judas reveals your identity to them with a kiss. His act of affection is a signal to point you out as the one who loves but is rejected by his own.

O Jesus, we are quick to greet you with affection in our prayer and worship. But how often do our external words and actions conceal hearts that are easily turned from you? We love you, Jesus, help us to love you with all of our hearts. Amen

Jesus Condemned by the Sanhedrin



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁶² And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” ⁶⁵ Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.”

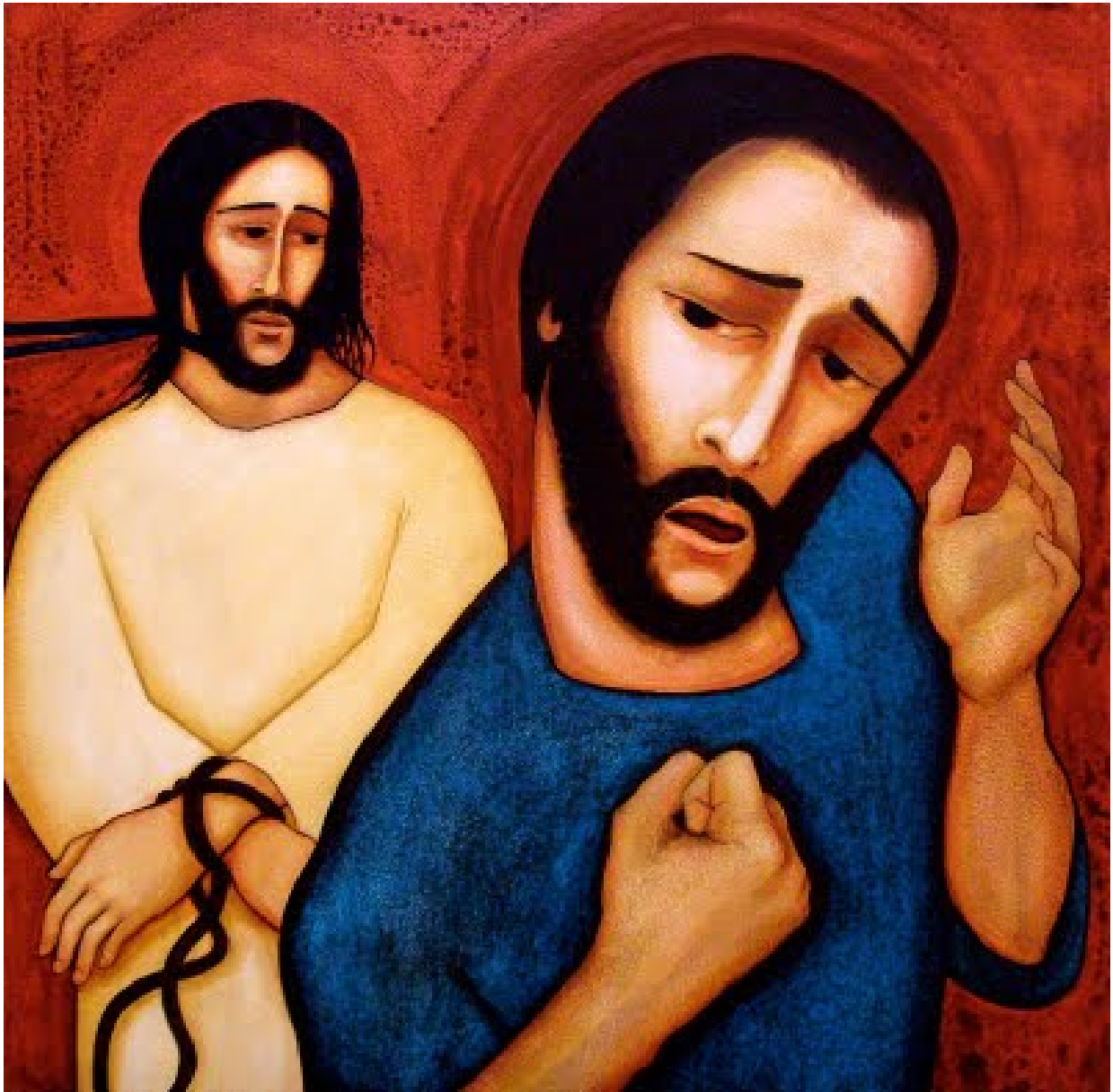
- Matthew 26:62-66

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, your words are blasphemy to the ears of the high priest. He tears his garments, unable to see the presence of God in the one who stands before him arrested and accused. He cannot believe in a God who, because of such great love, would willingly become so powerless.

O Jesus, we can be so limited in our vision. We find it difficult to look beyond our narrow expectations and see you as you are. Give us the grace to hear your words clearly and to follow you in truth. We love you, Jesus; reveal to us what God is like. Amen

Peter Denies Knowing Jesus



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean.” ⁷¹ And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

- **Matthew 26:69-75**

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, you told Peter that he would deny you three times before the rooster would crow. He did not believe you. He swore that he would never deny you, and that in fact he was willing to die for you. Peter felt that he knew himself better than you knew him. But now as dawn approaches and the rooster crows, he sees the truth.

O Jesus, we set out to follow you but then quickly turn, going our own way. We are afraid to acknowledge you in front of others, but you speak to us in the midst of our denial. We love you, Jesus; keep us faithful to you. Amen

Jesus Condemned by Pilate



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him... ²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

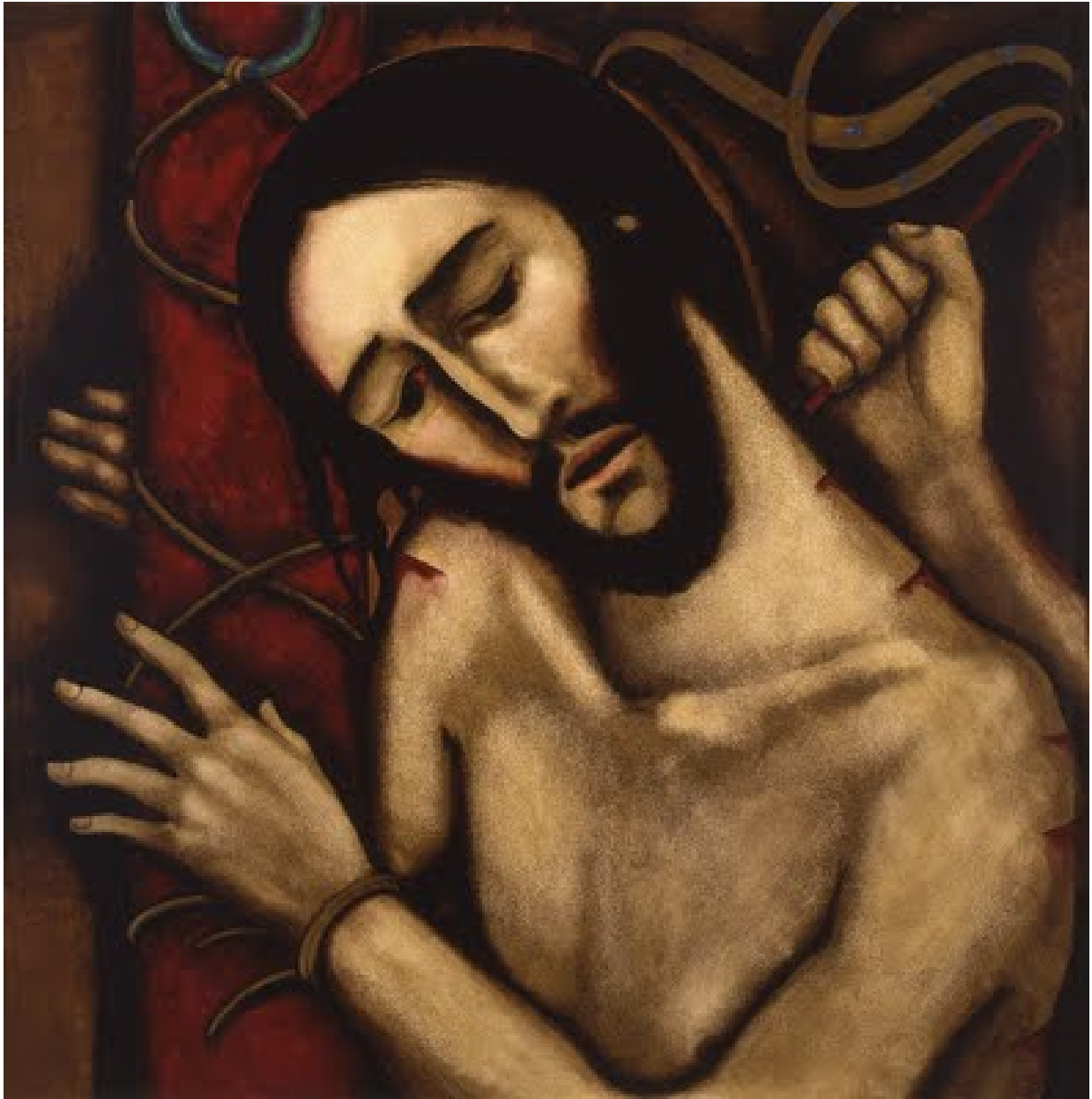
- **Luke 23:13-15, 23-25**

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, Pilate perceives your innocence, but the crowd insists on guilt. Hearing their persistent shouts, Pilate sets aside the judgment of his conscience, and the decision is made. He hands you over to be crucified.

O Jesus, how often do we let the threatening voice of the crowd overwhelm the voice of conscience? Fill us with compassion for the outcast and commitment to the truth. We love you, Jesus; lead us beyond the crowd. Amen

Jesus Scourged and Crowned with Thorns



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

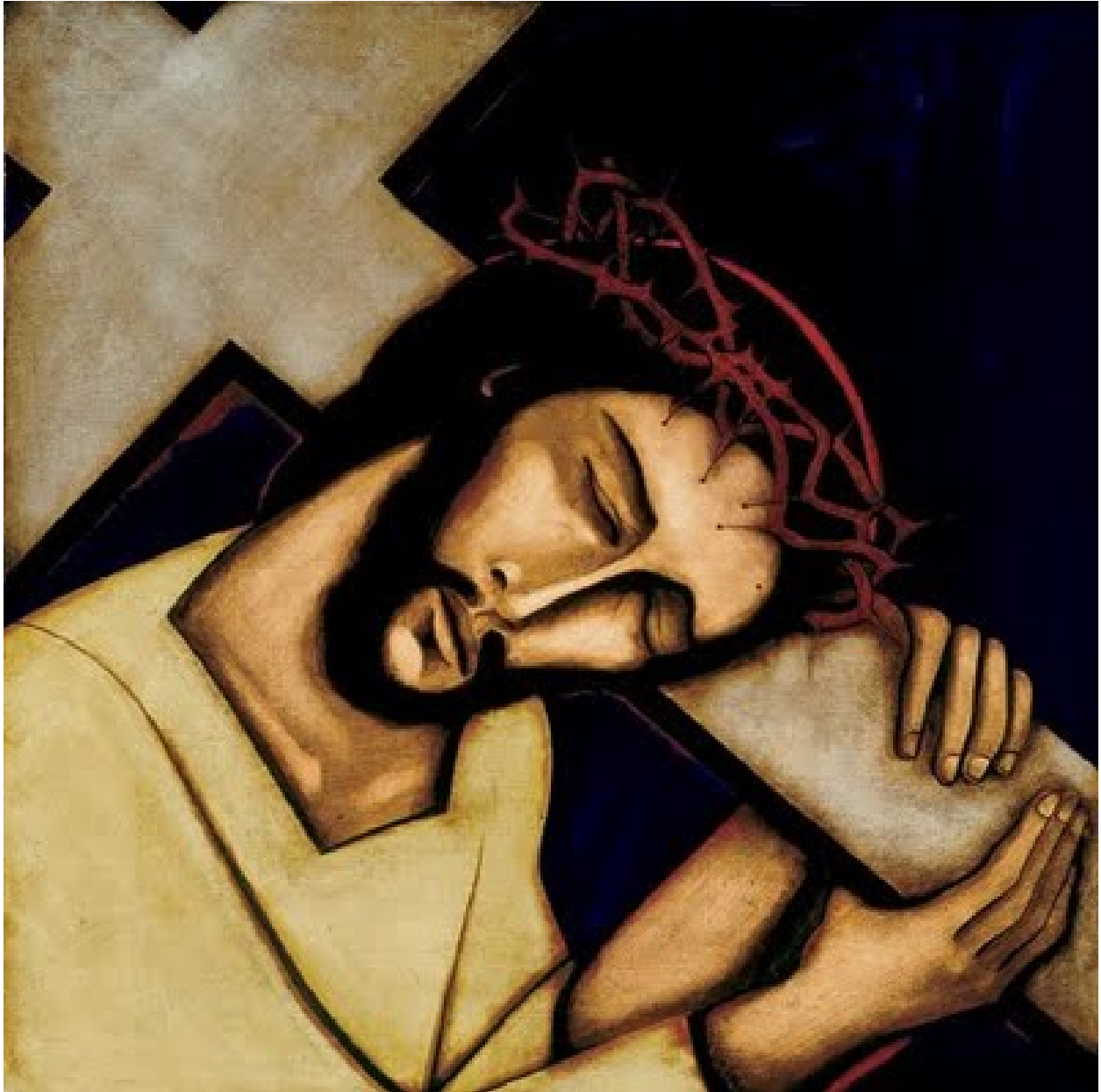
- Mark 15:16-20

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, soldiers of an earthly realm mock your kingship. You are so powerless in their eyes, so weak, the ruler of a kingdom that cannot be seen, and, therefore, must not exist. They treat you as a foolish impostor, caught in a lie.

O Jesus, how often do we look for the kingdom with the eyes of the world rather than with the eyes of faith. We forget your promise that your kingdom is among us. Help us to see your strength in our weakness, your reign in our powerlessness. We love you, Jesus; establish your rule over us. Amen

Jesus Takes up His Cross



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

¹⁶ So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, ¹⁷ and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

- John 19:16-17

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, like Isaac carrying the wood to the mountain, you set out with the wood of the cross. But unlike him you will not ask your Father where the lamb is, because you know you are the lamb of the sacrifice. You now begin your journey with the cross.

O Jesus, you carry a cross, which is given unjustly. You willingly bear the burden of our sinfulness and accept the cross of our guilt. There is no greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. We love you, Jesus; help us to show this love in our lives. Amen

Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus.

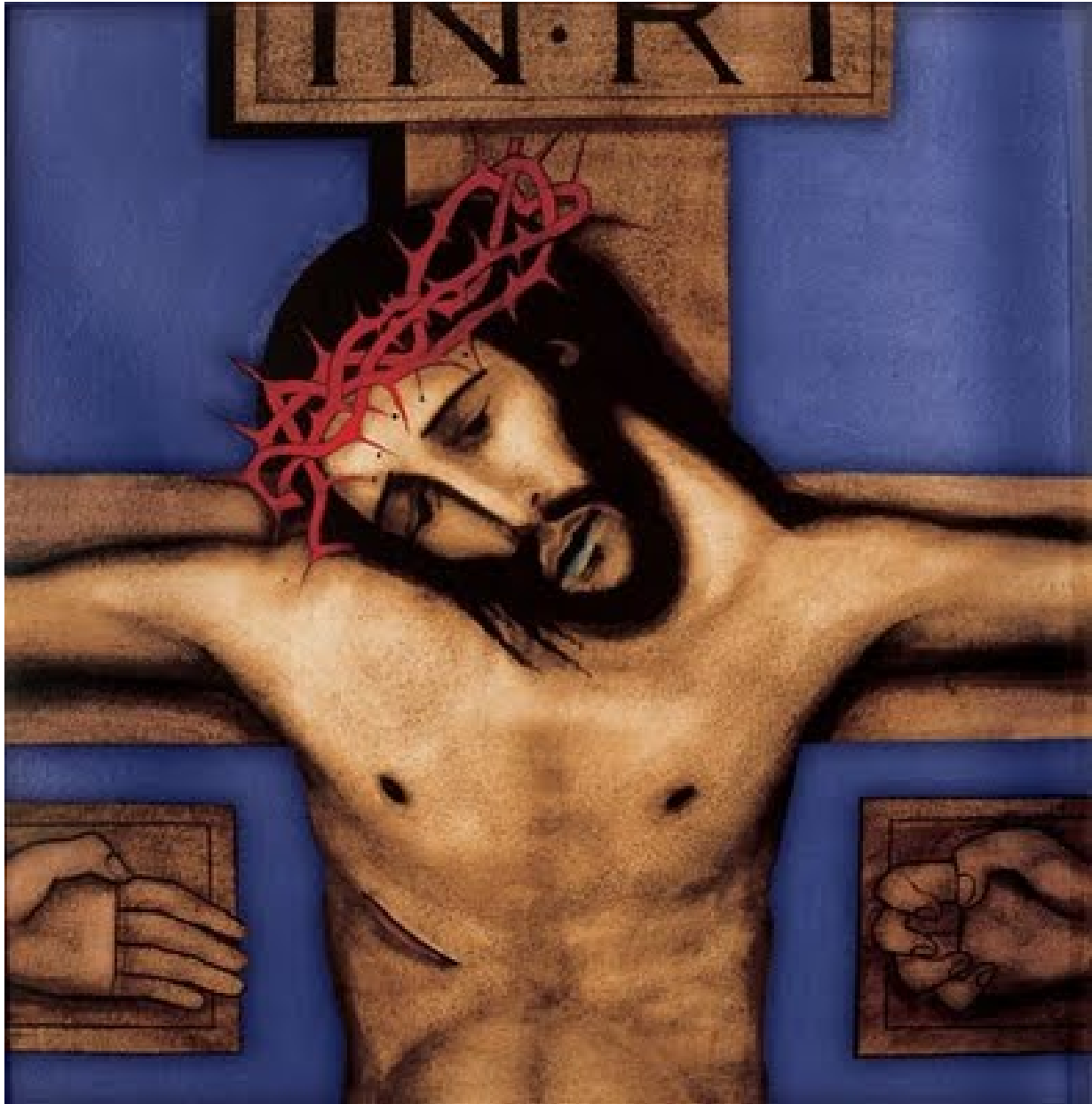
- Luke 23:26

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, the torture you experienced at the hands of the soldiers left you weak. When you prayed in the garden that the will of the Father be done, and angel was sent to strengthen you. Now as you seek to fulfill the Father's will, he sends Simon to help you.

O Jesus, strengthen us on our journey. Open our hearts to the help you offer through the kindness of others. Open our eyes to the needs of those who walk beside us. We love you, Jesus; lighten our burdens. Amen

Jesus is Crucified



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

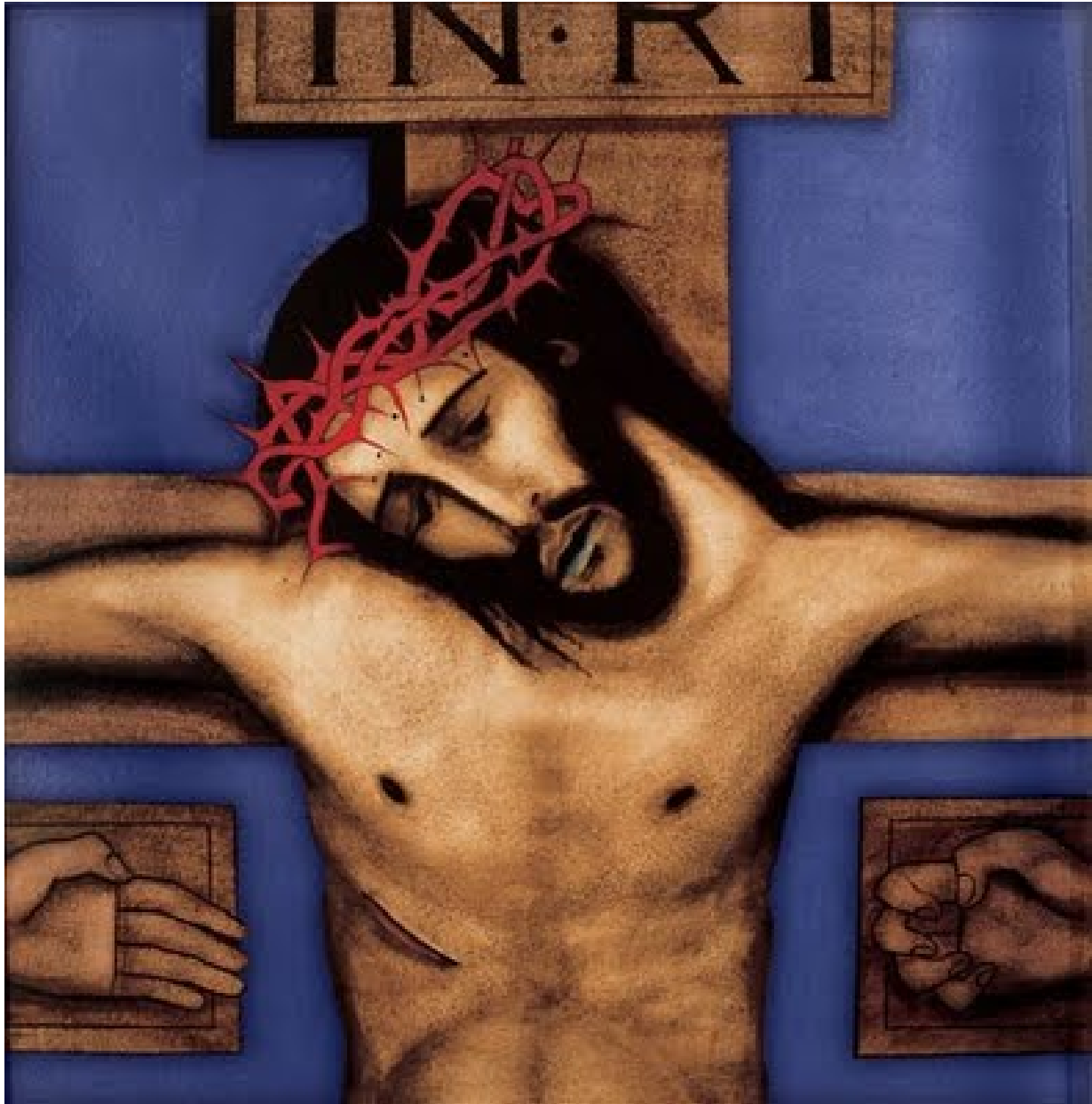
- Luke 23:33-38

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, your suffering continues as nails are driven into your hands and feet and taunting jeers are hurled at your body imprisoned on the cross. Yet to those who mock and challenge you, you offer no reproach, only forgiveness and compassion for them in their ignorance.

O Jesus, how often we have acted as if the way of the cross were unnecessary and too difficult. We believe we know a better way, a way worn down by the crowd. We find that path goes nowhere. Forgive us; we do not know what we are doing. We love you, Jesus; by your wounds heal us. Amen

Jesus Promises Paradise to the Thief



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

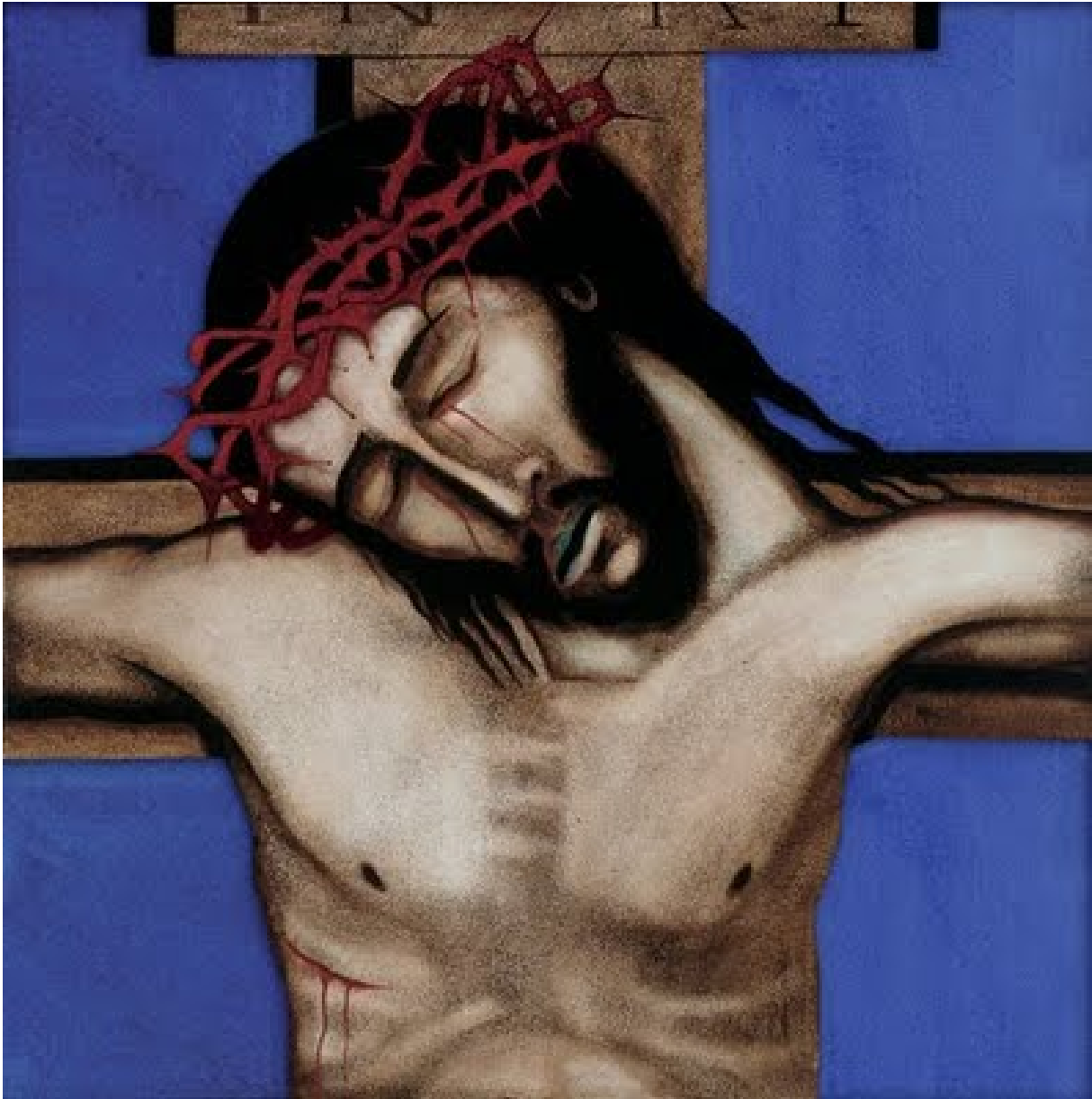
- **Luke 23:39-43**

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, two others are nailed on either side of you. One challenges you to release him now; the other asks to be freed with you in your kingdom. One sees only weakness; the other sees power and is able to trust in a promise of everlasting life with you as his time in this world comes to an end.

O Jesus, look upon us now. See us in our need and hear us as we cry out to you. Help us to trust you in difficult circumstances. Give us eyes to see your power in helpless times, to see your kingdom in all we encounter. We love you, Jesus; remember us. Amen

Jesus Dies



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

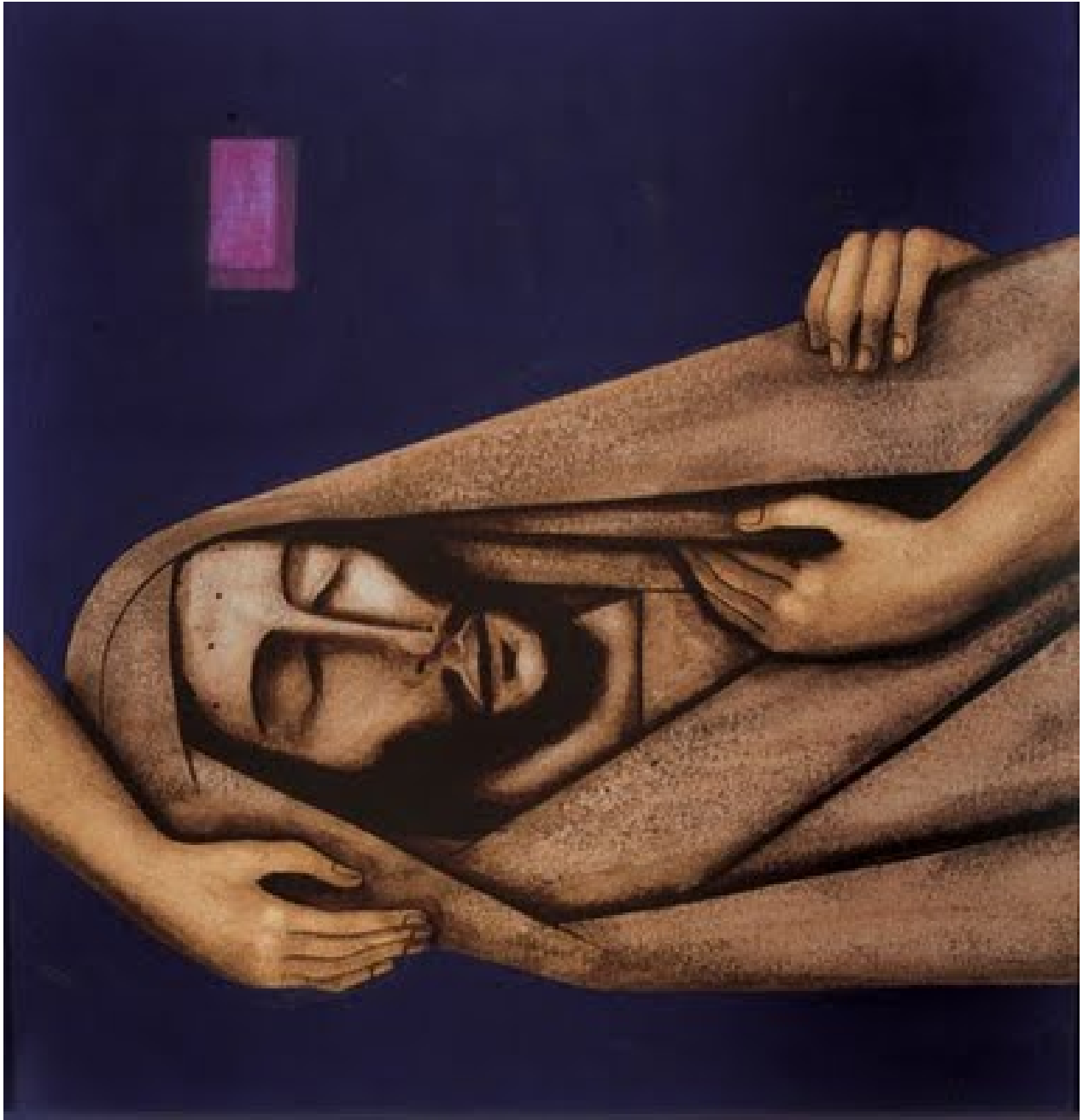
- Luke 23:44-47

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, the Word spoken by the Father, you now return to him, having accomplished the purpose for which you were sent. Your trust in the Father remains, even amid the dark clouds of death.

O Jesus, may we too accomplish the purpose for which we were created. Help us to commit ourselves into the Father's hands, to trust in him, and believe in his love for us, a love that your death reveals to us. May your dying never be in vain. We love you, Jesus; help us to die to ourselves and live for you. Amen

Jesus is Buried



Take 1 or 2 minutes to silently reflect upon the image above

Slowly read this passage of Scripture:

⁵³ Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. ⁵⁴ It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. ⁵⁵ The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

- Matthew 26:26-29

Use the following prayer as a guide for your own prayers:

Jesus, now the time of surrender, of being at rest, begins. It is the seventh day when God rested from the work of creation. And you, the Son of God, rest and await the dawn of the eighth day when all will be made new—and we wait with you.

O Jesus, teach us to rest. Deliver us from thinking that everything depends upon our actions. Help us to be patient in trusting that God will bring about the completion of his creation through you. We love you, Jesus; fill us with your peace. Amen

Sorrow may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Sunday is coming!